

Motorcycle Helmet Usage in Illinois

July 2002 Observational Survey Results

Survey Design

The recent motorcycle helmet survey was a statistical (multi-stage random) observational survey conducted statewide during July 2002 on both high volume state highways and low volume local roads and residential streets. The survey design was based on the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's requirements and had two characteristics.

1. The survey was conducted between 7:00 a.m. and 6:30 p.m. when the light was adequate for observation.
2. The survey sites included all interstate highways and freeways and a random sample of residential streets within selected areas.

There were 931 operators and passengers of motorcycles observed at 258 locations statewide. The survey provided a statistically representative sample of the state as a whole. For more information on survey design, refer to the original report entitled "Design of the New Safety Belt Usage Survey in Illinois", Division of Traffic Safety, Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), January 1994.

Summary of Findings

Results of the motorcycle survey conducted at 258 sites in July 2002 are summarized in Table 1. The first data column indicates the total number of motorcycle operators and passengers observed. Column 2 presents usage rates per 100 motorcycle riders. The categories listed on the left side of the table indicate the various regions of the state where the survey was conducted (with the number of survey sites in each region in parenthesis), road types, time of day the survey was conducted, and a breakdown of weekdays and weekends. A total

Motorcycle Helmet Usage Rates in Illinois (JULY 2002)

	Total Observed	Actual Usage Rate
	(1)	(2)
Statewide (258)	931	26.3%
Regions		
City of Chicago (46)	63	23.3%
Cook County (40)	75	28.2%
Collar Counties (118)	611	28.2%
Downstate (54)	182	20.9%
Road Type		
Residential (190)	395	25.6%
U.S./Illinois Highways (40)	110	26.3%
Interstate Highways (28)	427	27.5%
Time of Day		
Morning Rush Hours (55)	111	37.3%
Noon Rush Hours (45)	148	29.7%
Evening Rush Hours (23)	126	18.8%
Non-Rush Hours (135)	545	24.9%
Day of Week		
Weekends (115)	676	24.2%
Weekdays (143)	255	43.3%

of 931 motorcycle riders were observed. Of those, 26.3 percent were wearing helmets. Cook County and the collar counties (DuPage, Kane, Lake, McHenry, and Will) had the highest usage rates at 28.2 percent, while the City of Chicago had a usage rate of 23.3 percent. The downstate counties (Champaign, Macon, Montgomery, Peoria, Rock Island, and St.Clair) had the lowest usage rate at 20.9 percent.

There were slight differences among the different road types' usage rates. While interstate highways had the highest usage rate at 27.5 percent, U.S. and Illinois marked highways were

Table 1

close to that percentage with a usage rate of 26.3 percent. Residential roads also had a usage rate that was close to those with 25.6 percent of riders using helmets. The morning rush hours (7:00 a.m. to 9:30 a.m.) had the highest usage rate at 37.3 percent. The second highest usage rate was during noon rush hours (11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.) at 29.7 percent, while non-rush hours had a usage rate of 24.9 percent. The evening rush hour (4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.) had the lowest usage rate at 18.8 percent.

There was quite a difference in the usage rates on weekdays versus weekends. On the weekdays motorcyclists used helmets 43.3 percent of the time, while on weekends there was a usage rate of only 24.2 percent.

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